

Restaurant Business

JUNE 10, 1989

INDEPENDENT
FLEUR DE LIS

116

MENU IDEAS
SOFT-SERVE

233

SPECIAL REPORT
PROMO UPDATE

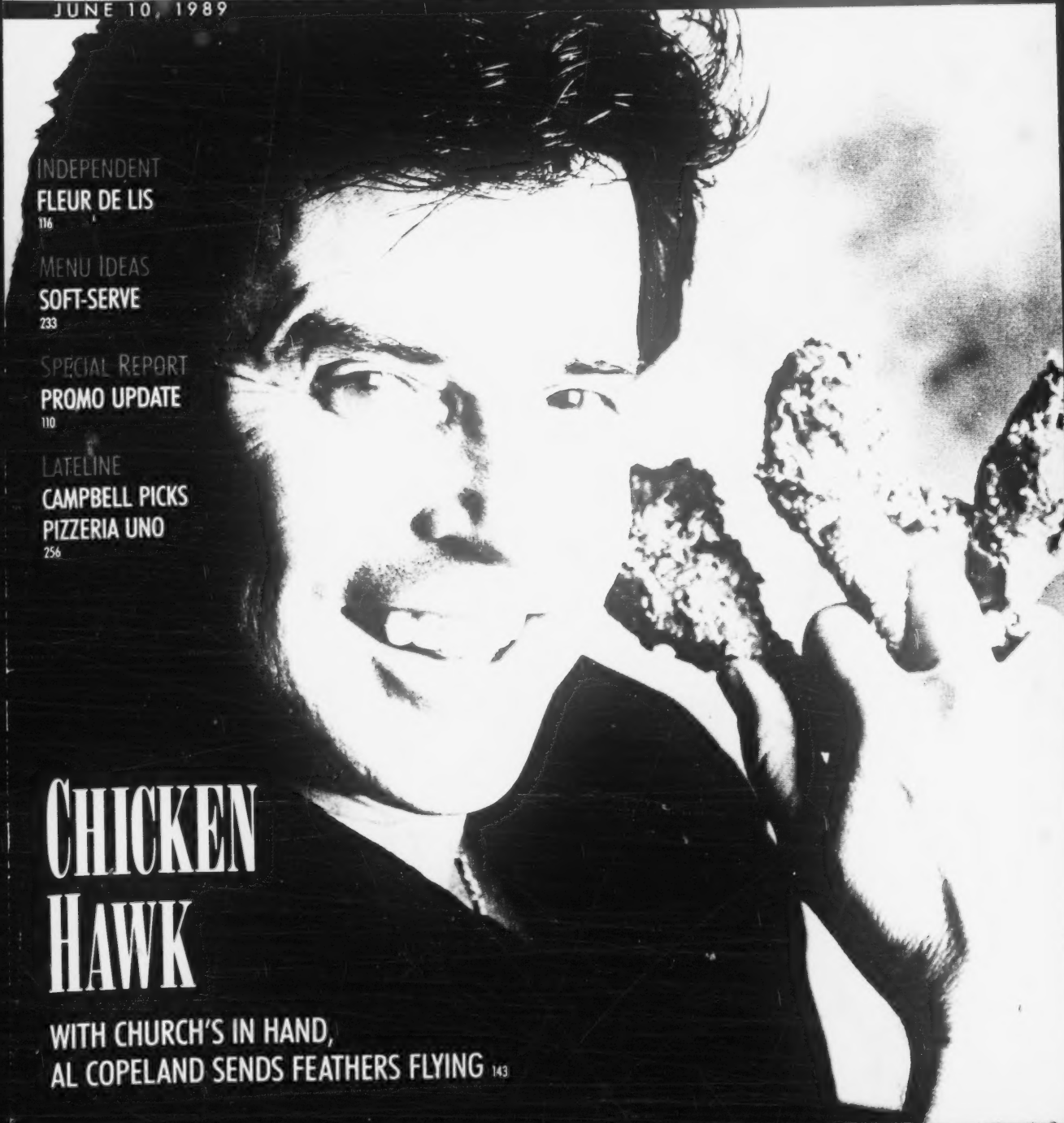
110

LATELINE
CAMPBELL PICKS
PIZZERIA UNO

256

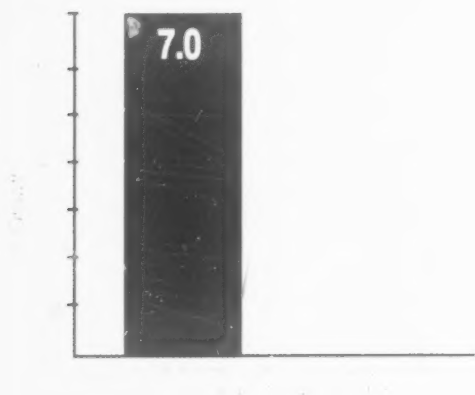
CHICKEN HAWK

WITH CHURCH'S IN HAND,
AL COPELAND SENDS FEATHERS FLYING 143



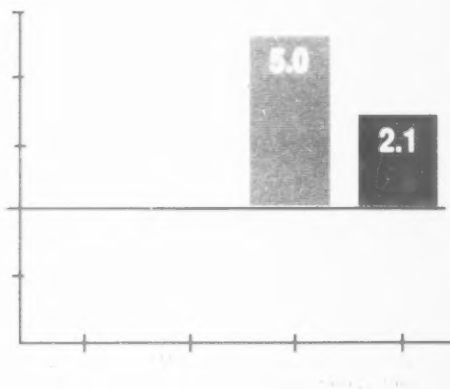
BUSINESS BAROMETER

THE HARD FACTS SHAPING OUR INDUSTRY



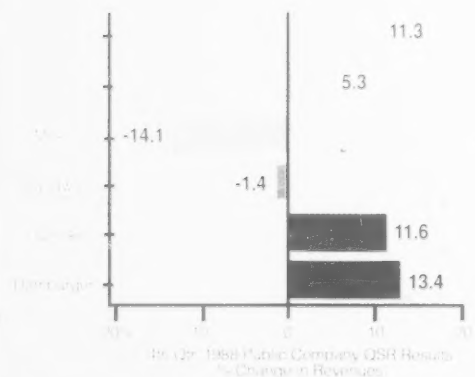
CPI Favors Eating Out

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for food away from home (FAFH) jumped a relatively modest 4.6% in the first quarter of 1989 versus the same period last year. This compares to a 7.0% increase in the CPI for food at home (FAH). While the CPI increase for FAFH has been lower than the CPI for FAH over the last nine months, inflation in FAFH has been increasing over the past 15 months. The CPI for FAFH has increased 3.6%, 4.0%, 4.2%, and 4.3%, respectively, in the first through fourth quarters of 1989.



Upscale Market Rebounds

According to data from CREST, a service of NPD Research, customer traffic rebounded at upscale restaurants during the winter quarter. Customer traffic jumped 5.0% in the upscale segment versus a 1.1% drop in the fall quarter and similar decreases throughout most of 1988. Quick service continued to show growth with a 3.4% traffic increase versus just 0.6% in the fall. Midscale operators, however, continued to show real declines. Customer traffic dropped another 2.1% in the winter quarter after a 2.3% decrease in the fall.



Burgers Post Best Results

Revenues from quick-service restaurant (QSR) operations increased a healthy 11.3% in normal terms for the 33 largest publicly held restaurant chains during the fourth quarter of 1988 (ending February). Mexican and All Other chains, however, experienced revenue declines. The burger segment accounted for a 13.4% increase in revenue, supported by a 14.6% gain by McDonald's. Thanks to a moderate revenue growth by the largest publicly held chicken chains, revenues increased by 11.6% in the segment.

QSR 1989 Company Quarterly Reports, forthcoming

RESTAURANT BUSINESS CONTENTS

JUNE 10, 1989

VOL. 88 NO. 9



COVER STORY: Popeyes' founder Al Copeland, page 143.



MENU IDEAS: Ice Cream/Soft Serve, page 233.

COVER STORY

STRATEGY POPEYES. Al Copeland, the founder of Popeyes Famous Fried Chicken & Biscuits, has got his work cut out for him in the wake of his recent \$392 million acquisition of San Antonio-based Church's Fried Chicken... 143

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

DRAFTS, CARAFES & SPIRITS FRUIT-BASED DELIGHTS. Fruit-flavored drinks have broad appeal... 221

MENU IDEAS ICE CREAM/SOFT SERVE. Operators reap high profit margins from frozen treats... 233

PIECE MEAL CREPES. A versatile menu addition... 241

FEATURES

MULTI-UNIT GREAT AMERICAN RESTAURANTS. Thriving in the Washington, DC, market, this group of seven restaurants projects sales of over \$20 million... 104

MARKETING PROMOTIONS. How operators can get the maximum stretch of their marketing dollars... 110

FOR INDEPENDENTS FLEUR DE LIS. This erstwhile Milwaukee landmark was foundering until new management improved morale, food quality, and image... 116

FOR INDEPENDENTS COPPER CELLAR. The success of eight-unit Copper Cellar Corp. depends upon controlling quality at every level... 122

INDUSTRY EVENT CENTER OF PLATE CONFERENCE. In cooperation with the American Meat Institute, RB sponsored the first Center of Plate Conference... 127

TECHNOLOGY COMPUTER APPLICATIONS. Now, an instantaneous description of daily operations... 136

EDUCATION HRI PROJECT. Students at four HRI schools studied the challenges of alternative labor... 157

GROWTH CHAIN ALLIE'S. Marriott aims to establish its new Allie's concept as a dominant force... 172

MARKET SEGMENT REPORT COUNTRY/BBQ. Although no chain has a national presence, regional chains and independents have created profitable niches... 179

Cover photograph by Michael Terranova

Published 18 times a year by Restaurant Business Magazine, 633 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017
Vol. 88 No. 9. Second Class Postage paid at New York, N.Y. and additional office (ISSN 0097-8043).
Postmaster please send address change to Restaurant Business, P.O. Box 5309, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10017.

COLUMNS AND DEPARTMENTS

BUSINESS BAROMETER	2
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, <i>A Plethora of Readers</i>	9
RESTAURANT OPENINGS	16
INSIGHTS, <i>Industry News</i>	20
MENU PLANNER'S GUIDE	59
FOOD FACTS	73
WORTH WRITING FOR	74
TRADE QUOTES, <i>Stock Market Reports</i>	76
HUMAN RESOURCES, <i>Jobs and Recruiters</i>	78
MANAGEMENT, <i>Franchise Dining</i>	82
CUSTOMER SERVICE, <i>Serving Your Franchise</i>	84
COMPUTER LINK, <i>Electronic Restaurant Records</i>	92
CALENDAR	96
MARKETING, <i>Advertising and Publicity</i>	100
EQUIPMENT I.Q., <i>Restaurant Equipment</i>	206
BUYER'S CIRCLE, <i>Nationwide Franchise Directory</i>	210
BAR MANAGEMENT GUIDE	226
SANITATION, <i>A Clean Sweep</i>	244
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS	250
LATELINE, <i>Last-minute Newsbooks</i>	256
INDEX TO OPERATORS	262
INDEX TO ADVERTISERS	264
READER COMMENT CARD	265

INDUSTRY EVENT

The *Seventh SYMPOSIUM ON AMERICAN CUISINE*, sponsored by Restaurant Business, will take place in Santa Fe, NM, Sept. 10-13, 1989.

For more information, contact: S. L. Posner at American Cuisine, 304 W. Liberty St., Suite 301, Louisville, KY 40202.

REPRINTS, INDEX AVAILABLE

Restaurant Business now has available specially prepared reprints of the **1988 RESTAURANT GROWTH INDEX** and the **1989 MAJOR FORCES IN FRANCHISING**. The reprints are available for \$5 per copy.

In addition, Restaurant Business is now offering its **1988 EDITORIAL INDEX** for \$25 per copy.

Direct all reprint inquiries to: Editor Peter Berkusky, Restaurant Business magazine, 634 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

Produce Marketing Association..... Part II



Market Segment Report: *Counter BBQ*, page 179

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

COVER STORY

THE EMBASSY SUITES SAGA

Embassy Suites, the all-suite division of Holiday Corp., has developed an interesting food & beverage strategy: It lets someone else do the cooking. The Dallas-based company signs contracts with local operators and chains who can provide well-known, branded foodservice to its hotel guests. This strategy allows Embassy Suites to concentrate its resources behind its expertise: lodging.

MARKET SEGMENT REPORT STEAK

Beef is back, and the steak segment is benefiting. But declines in beef consumption in the '80s have already changed the segment, as operators diversified menus.

MENU IDEAS

AMERICAN COUNTRY COOKING

American cuisine has come a long way in the past decade, but today some of the most interesting developments are in country cooking. This month, *RB* travels the country to find out how chefs are adapting our native cuisine.

DRAFTS, CARAFES & SPIRITS

WORLDWIDE WINES FOR VALUE

Savvy operators are turning to the lesser-known wines of France, Spain, Italy, and the United States to offer value to their customers.

EQUIPMENT I.Q.

FOOD PROCESSING EQUIPMENT

Food processing equipment provides important menu versatility to the operator.

Are you reading someone else's copy of Restaurant Business?



WANT YOUR OWN FREE SUBSCRIPTION?

You may be eligible to receive
RB free of charge. To get things
started, complete and forward
the coupon below and we'll send
you a qualification form.

MAIL TO:

**Restaurant
Business**
633 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10017
ATTN: Circulation

NAME _____

TITLE _____

FIRM _____

STREET _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

Restaurant Business

EDITORIAL STAFF

EDITOR Peter R. Berlinski
EXECUTIVE EDITOR Joan Lang
MANAGING EDITOR Tom Strenk
ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR Shelley Wolson
NEWS EDITOR Howard Riell
SENIOR WRITER Paul Frumkin
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Donna Perkinson
PRODUCTS EDITOR Herme Shore
ASSISTANT TO THE EDITOR Mary Ann Tasoulas

FOOD EDITOR Scott Allmendinger
BEVERAGE EDITOR James Scarpa
FOOD CONSULTANT Kathleen Kenny Sanderson

WEST COAST EDITOR Kevin Farrell
(714) 964-6470

MIDWEST EDITOR James Scarpa
(312) 782-1266

WASHINGTON COLUMNIST Edmund Andrews

ART DIRECTOR Lisa Powers
ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR Beth Meyers
ASSOCIATE GRAPHICS DIRECTOR Shari Fang
ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR Susan Froberg

SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITORS Denise M. Brennan
Patricia Moore Kolb

COLUMNISTS

Patricia Baird Dr. Michael Kasavana
Irv L. Elackman Gen LaGreca
Dr. Joseph Durocher Karen MacNeil
David L. Epstein Bill Main
Dr. Mortimer R. Feinberg Edmund Osterland
Dr. Sandy Kapoor Karen Wilk Rubin
Don Shapiro

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Carol Casper Don Nichols
Jacque White Kochak
James Peters

PRESIDENT/GROUP PUBLISHER Jeffrey P. Berlind

Editorial Office

633 Third Ave., New York, NY 10017
(212) 986-4800

Midwest Office

180 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 782-1266

West Coast Office

10540 Talbert Ave., East Tower, Suite 150
Fountain Valley, CA 92708
(714) 964-6470

RESTAURANT BUSINESS Magazine (formerly FAST FOOD) (ISSN 0097-8043) is published 18 times a year by Bill Communications, Inc., 633 Third Ave., New York, NY 10017. Telephone: 212-986-4800. Copyright © 1989 by Bill Communications, Inc. All rights reserved. Subscriptions in the U.S., \$74; foreign and Canada, \$114; air mail, \$212. Single copies in the U.S. and Canada, \$5. Second class postage paid at New York, NY and at additional offices. Postmaster: Send address corrections to Restaurant Business, Attention: Roseanne Walsh, Circ. Dept., 633 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017-6743.

Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use, or the internal or personal use by specific clients, is granted by Restaurant Business for libraries and other users registered with the Copyright Clearance (CCC) Transactional Reporting Service, provided that the base fee of \$3 per copy is paid directly to CCC, 21 Congress St., Salem, MA 01970. (0273-9313/81 \$3) Special requests should be addressed to Peter Berlinski at Restaurant Business.

THE
HRI
PROJECT

Alternative LABOR

**THE SHORTAGE
OF WORKERS
BEGINS WITH
OPERATORS'
LACK OF
RECRUITMENT.**

Despite a growing labor shortage, four groups of potential employees — minorities, seniors, women, and the handicapped — are not being fully utilized by the food-service industry. This situation presents a human resources dilemma and a serious challenge for managers and operators.

Last fall, *Restaurant Business* asked four Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution schools — the University of New Hampshire, Purdue University, the University of Houston, and Michigan State University — to research the problem of recruitment and retention of these alternative sources of labor.

Each school used its academic resources to help us develop solutions to this problem. Professors had both their undergraduate and graduate students conduct various surveys to investigate operator attitudes and strategies regarding alternative labor.

Their conclusions? The industry has a long way to go to fully integrate these potential workers into the labor pool. What follows are each school's research results and recommendations.

continued on page 158

BY SHELLEY WOLSON

EDUCATION

THE HRI PROJECT

**THE ACUTE
LABOR
SHORTAGE
MEANS THAT
OPERATORS
CAN'T
OVERLOOK
ANY GROUP
OF POTENTIAL
WORKERS.**

University of New Hampshire

According to UNH's telephone survey of 35 operators, the following recommendations may help in the battle to retain and recruit the four groups of workers:

SENIORS

Retention for older workers can be increased by allowing them to work shorter hours and flexible shifts. Specially planned social events would be a lure to the work environment and help attract and retain senior citizens.

HANDICAPPED

Facilities should be provided for handicapped persons to make them feel comfortable performing their job tasks. This would include ramps for wheelchairs, lower benches, automated doors, larger kitchen floor space, and equipped rest rooms.

ETHNIC MINORITIES

Promotion and retention of this group can be accomplished by offering English as a second language either on property or through a local school. Managers should have a foreign language background or take classes to improve communications. Warning signs and other important information should be written in other languages to make work environment safe and more comfortable.

WOMEN

Day care and maternity programs will prove to be the most important in giving employers the competitive edge in attracting and retaining qualified female workers. Promotion from within will also aid retention.

For their study on how well restaurateurs are making use of alternative labor sources, students at the **University Of New Hampshire's Whittemore School of Business** randomly selected 35 restaurants in New England for a telephone survey. They interviewed operators in six major cities and suburbs.

Using a matrix to cross reference the four employee categories (ethnic minorities, women, seniors, and the handicapped), UNH students asked operators the following questions: Why do you reject a potential employee for employment or promotion? Where do employment or advancement opportunities exist? In what types of operations, and at what levels? What are the hours,

working conditions, and pay?

Students found that the reasons for poor retention and recruitment differed between the four groups in the Northeastern area. For example, the main factors that lead employers to reject ethnic minorities are language difficulties and immigration laws. Women, however, were found to be actively employed and promoted at all levels.

For handicapped people and seniors, there are obstacles, the report notes, "due to the nature of the work involved in operating a restaurant in its peak production periods. But if a handicapped person or senior citizen is able to do the job, they are seldom turned away."

It was found that most of the opportunities for handicapped people are in the kitchen; employers generally do not want visibly handicapped individuals in full view of the restaurant's guests. Also, promotion for some positions may be virtually impossible for some handicapped people, depending on the severity and type of disability. Seniors were found in many entry-level positions; long-term employment commitments were not being pursued by that group.

UNH's recommendations (see chart on this page) center on making all four groups more comfortable in the work environment, thus enhancing productivity and reducing turnover: "The acute labor

continued on page 164

THE HRI PROJECT

THE PROBLEM:

OPERATORS

DON'T VIEW

THEIR NOT

HIRING

MINORITIES

AND WOMEN

AS A

PROBLEM.

kind of benefits when possible, along with other incentive programs, to retain workers.

Purdue University's Department of Restaurant, Hotel, and Institutional Management focused its research on minority employment in the restaurant industry.

Students contacted 187 restaurants by phone and asked managers or assistant managers 11 questions. The survey queried operators on the number of minority workers they employ, the problems they have in attracting this group of potential employees, and their attitudes toward minority qualifications for employment.

Sixty percent of the restaurants have 26 to 50 employees. These are midsize establishments located in cities of less than 50,000 population. While these cities do not have the large minority populations of larger cities, there are still sizable numbers in these cities. Only 10% of these operators' staffs are minorities.

Seventy-four percent of the respondents said they had trouble attracting and retaining qualified workers because of the industry's poor image and relatively low wages. But, Purdue students point out, "The bottom line is that 88% of the companies have not done anything to recruit, attract, or retain members of minority groups, thus missing out on a potentially valuable labor resource." In addition, the majority of the participants cited poor work attitudes and poor communication skills that hurt minorities' chances at employment at their establishments.

Because of this belief, students felt this might explain why operators may not have done more to attract or recruit minority workers.

Purdue students found that these operators did not have a lot of answers as to how to correct this situation. "This can be partially attributed to the fact that they don't think they have a problem and that they don't see minorities as an underutilized group they seek to work with," the report says. They concluded that what is needed is an industry conference that would bring together industry people, academic experts, and other groups to discuss and exchange ideas on how to bring more minorities into the industry's work force.

(Note: In January, the National Res-

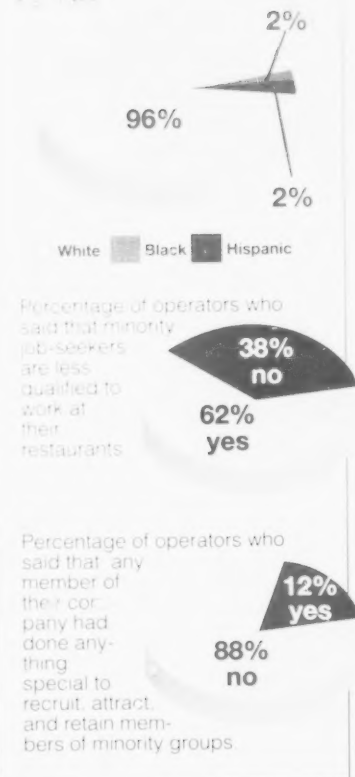
taurant Association held such a program, a symposium called "Foodservice Employment 2000," where representatives from a variety of groups met and shared strategies to meet foodservice recruitment, retention, and advancement needs.)

Continued on page 166

Purdue University

This study through 187 telephone interviews with Indiana fast-food operators determined some key statistics about the problems of retaining minority workers.

Researcher: T. J. Anderson, Department of Restaurant, Hotel, and Institutional Management, Purdue University, 100 S. 13th St., West Lafayette, IN 47907-1330



shortage in the Northeastern U.S. prevents any wise restaurateur from categorically rejecting any class of workers. On-site day care, immigration assistance, transportation, and housing subsidies will position the modern operator in an enviable employment environment vis-a-vis his competition."

UNH students offer the following example from their interviews: At one Oriental restaurant, located in a rural area outside of Boston, the operator provides transportation two or three times a week to the establishment for his cooks from Chinatown. He couples this benefit with housing that he provides on a 100% subsidized basis. UNH strongly recommends providing these

THE HRI PROJECT

CAFETERIAS

OFFER MORE

OPPORTUNITIES

FOR SENIORS;

PHYSICAL

LIMITATIONS

AND IMAGE

ARE NOT AS

CRITICAL.

The University of Houston's Hilton College Of HRM conducted a series of interviews to determine if Houston operators actively recruit senior citizens for their staffs, and to assess restaurateurs' attitudes about doing so. The surplus of younger workers in the Houston area, an attitude that seniors are not as capable, and the "negative" image of using older workers visibly (in the front of the house) were some of the reasons some restaurateurs are not actively reaching out to the older community. Another problem is that, according to the Houston Restaurant Association, there are more applicants than jobs. However, some operators

University of Houston, Hilton College of HRM

HIRING SENIORS

Employers may be hesitant to hire older workers because they often need special considerations. According to this college's survey of Houston operators, it's even tougher for the elderly in the Houston market because there is a labor surplus. The researchers concluded that there are both pros and cons to hiring senior citizens, but the pros outweigh the cons.

PROS

- ✓ Dependable
- ✓ Mature
- ✓ Often require less training and supervision
- ✓ Often relate better to clientele

CONS

- Can affect staff cohesiveness—personality conflicts may arise because workers are not peers
- Can affect restaurant's image: Older workers don't appeal to yuppies
- Physical limitations

acknowledged that sometimes senior citizens can be more desirable employees than teens, especially in the cafeteria or family-style segments.

Cafeterias offer more opportunities for older workers, the report notes. "Physical limitations and image are not as critical in this type of operation." Because older workers tend to be placed behind the serving line, the worry of not attracting a younger clientele doesn't exist.

Many operators lauded McDonald's successful efforts to recruit seniors, and pointed out that older workers often function as role models for younger staff, in addition to performing their other duties. Still, most operators refrain from using this alternate labor source. "Turnover is a fact of life in the restaurant industry, even though operators don't like it. Restaurateurs will not attempt innovative ways to keep employees or find new sources of labor unless they perceive a crisis situation in the labor force," the report concludes.

Michigan State University's School Of Hotel, Restaurant & Institutional Management undertook a study of women in the foodservice industry. Their research confirms that women are underutilized in foodservice management, just as in other service and business industries. Those women who do attain managerial positions in

hospitality soon leave their positions due to inequality in compensation, raises, and bonuses, the researchers found.

A lack of maternity and day-care programs doesn't help either. "The hospitality industry is facing a labor shortage problem, yet it is simultaneously not caring for the needs of working parents. If the industry offered a more attractive maternity leave policy it would attract more women and help reduce the labor shortage," MSU students report.

Another problem unique to women in the industry and in business is that of obtaining credit to open a restaurant. According to experts, commercial banks do not provide credit equitably to men and women. Students found one positive step forward: the Small Business Administration's Women Business Ownership Program. The SBA sometimes is able to provide financial help not only to women but also to other minority groups seeking backing for new business ventures.

These researchers concluded that many challenges still lie ahead for women in foodservice: "If women are to be a vital part of the hospitality industry, we must be able to see, understand, and take action against any and all sex discrimination. As women become more evident in the work force, many of the past discriminations will lessen." 3

**MARKET
SEGMENT
REPORT**

COUNTRY BARBECUE

DESPITE CUSTOMER INTEREST, the barbecue and country segments remain difficult because preferences are strongly regional. No chain has yet to develop a national presence. But in their regions, smaller chains and independents have carved out profitable niches. And some dishes, such as barbecued ribs and country-fried steak, have migrated into mainstream menus.

RIB TICKLING. The 130-unit Tony Roma's is the largest and most successful rib concept. It is the notable success in a category shadowed by Luther's failure to become a national barbecue chain some years ago.

The privately owned Dallas-based chain has strongholds in Southern California, Florida, and New York. It has franchised 25 units overseas, in Canada, Japan, Australia, several Caribbean nations, and the United Kingdom.

Roma's rib selection includes baby back ribs, St. Louis-cut spareribs, beef ribs, and a couple of new rib products added in the past year: Carolina honey ribs (a large rib with a molasses and honey sauce) and spicy Cajun pork ribs.

"Despite what they say about strong regional tastes, our baby back ribs are best sellers in every one of our restau-

rants in various markets," says vice president of marketing Gene Eskew.

Roma's also menus a few nonbarbecued dishes such as grilled seafood and poultry and ribeye and sirloin steaks, for a broader appeal and to reduce the "veto factor" in mixed parties. Lunch fare is lighter, with croissant sandwiches, soups, and salads menued along with lunch-size rib portions. Prices range from \$10.95 to \$12.95 for a dinner portion (not quite a full slab) of baby back ribs, depending on the market. A

continued on page 180

The County Line Barbeque offers wood-smoked items in an upscale '40s-theme roadhouse atmosphere.

No player has national presence, but regional chains and independents have carved profitable niches.

By James Scarpa



COUNTRY BARBECUE

full slab runs \$12.95 to \$15.95.

The potential of ribs has not been lost on USACafes L.P., the Dallas-based master franchisor of Bonanza family restaurants. In 1987, USACafes debuted Ribby's Express Barbecue, a quick-service drive-thru and delivery barbecue concept. For the past two years, USACafes has nurtured two company-owned Ribby's kiosks in Dallas. Now, pleased with their performance, it says that franchise expansion is at hand for Ribby's over the next year.

"Some highly experienced restaurant players in the Gulf states are interested in Ribby's," says president and CEO Jeff Rogers. "And we're on the verge of having some pilot units opened by Bonanza area developers."

Rogers says he is especially pleased with Ribby's delivery business, which has hit 45% of sales, surpassing its tar-

get of 40%. And, as anticipated, barbecue holds up well in delivery. Delivery is free within a limited area for a \$5 minimum order from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and for a \$10 minimum order after 5 p.m. Major credit cards are accepted.

USACafes has built value as well as convenience into the concept. Ribby's charges \$6.99 for a full rack of barbecued baby back ribs and \$24.99 for Ribby's Family Feast, which comprises 13 ribs, 4 chicken quarters, 4 sausage links, and a half-pound of rib tips.

INDEPENDENTS. Despite these chain forays into barbecue, independent operators still dominate the category.

The New Jersey shore is hardly known as a barbecue hotbed. But pioneering independent operators Mark and Connie Strassburg have found Atlantic Highlands, NJ, a good market for Memphis Pig Out, their Southern-style barbecue restaurant bedecked with pig

Some of the more popular dishes, such as barbecued ribs and country-fried steak, have migrated onto mainstream menus.

ribs and baby back ribs. Prices range from \$8.95 to \$13.95. In addition, New Jerseyans are catching on to "the favorite of expatriate Southerners—pulled pork shoulder," says Mark Strassburg.

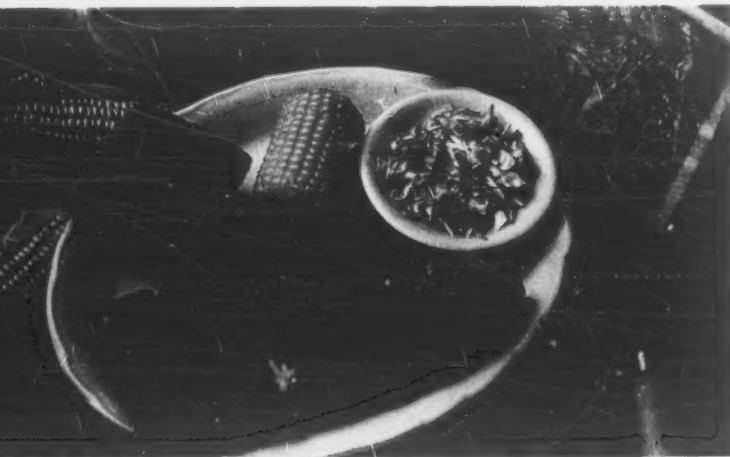
In College Station, TX, independent operator John Beltrand of Tom's Barbecue recreates a rough-and-ready frontier days atmosphere. His Aggie Special, the cult favorite of Texas A&M University students, is a bountiful barbecue spread that handles big appetites, at \$4.50 a head. To feed three people, Beltrand serves a pound and a half of sliced barbecued beef brisket, a basket of white bread, a whole pickle and onion, a chunk of cheddar cheese, and warm barbecue sauce in a pancake syrup dispenser. It's served unceremoniously on butcher paper with a single knife as the only utensil.

In the highly competitive Atlanta market, Jilly's, The Place For Ribs, a four-unit Roswell, GA-based chain, is fighting back by broadening its menu. General manager Harry McMahan has added steaks, burgers, salads, and seafood to the menus of the two franchised Jilly's stores he runs. Yet he clings to the rib specialist reputation. "We have to do ribs better than a place with a 200-item menu," he says. The two franchised Jilly's purchase 40 to 60, 30-lb. cases of ribs per week, he says.

BBQ. The largest chain in the country specializing in wood-smoked, Southern-style barbecue is Gainesville, FL-based Sonny's Real Pit Bar-B-Q. It has 77 full-service stores; 50 are in Florida. Total sales last year topped \$73 million.

Early this year, founder and owner Sonny Tillman sold the franchising

continued on page 182



Nashville-based Po Folks' idea of country cooking is ribs, freshly baked corn bread, and lots of vegetables and side dishes.

paraphernalia. They enjoyed a thriving summer, while competing seafood operators felt the sting of rising fish prices and contamination scares.

Memphis Pig Out serves Memphis-type barbecue to more than 350 customers on weekend nights. Meats are dry-rubbed with spices, then slowly smoked over hickory wood. The "secret" ingredient, which the owners say distinguishes the house barbecue sauce, is meat drippings.

Almost 75% of sales come from spare-

COUNTRY BARBECUE

company and four company stores to M Group International. M Group president Robert B. Malkani says he plans to increase both franchising and company store expansion in the Midwest and East as well as the South. The new Sonny's regime anticipates 10 franchise openings this year—a company record, says director of franchise development Bill Arnold. It is evaluating its first in-line strip center unit in Tampa and a fast-food prototype store.

Another traditional barbecue concept is Cocoa, FL-based Fat Boys' Bar-B-Q. Fat Boys' is a 34-unit system all but two are franchised—featuring both full-service "leisure" stores and quick-service units. Estimated total investment to open a leisure restaurant that seats 167 is \$607,500 to \$749,000, while the 64-seat drive-thru unit ranges from \$459,000 to \$578,000.

"Years ago, there was no barbecue equipment, only fire-brick pits," recalls

Despite customer interest, barbecue and country remain difficult to crack because preferences are strongly regional.

Fat Boys' president Jay Bradley. "This made it difficult to sell large volumes of barbecue." But today, efficient modern equipment has replaced the old barbecue pits.

Fat Boys' turns the meat, bastes it with sauce, then pre-smokes it until it is 70% done. The meat is then finished to

order in a "service pit," says Bradley.

Bradley anticipates that Fat Boys' will expand to Omaha, St. Louis, and Reading, PA. There are two deals under negotiation in Orlando and inquiries from California. He expects that the concept's style of barbecue will find acceptance in the Midwest. "Their barbecue style is very similar to ours," Bradley says. "We might have trouble in the western Carolinas, though, where they use mustard sauce on chopped meat."

A CUT ABOVE. Upscale barbecue restaurants feature a barbecue experience with more atmosphere than the picnic benches and farm implement decor of traditional "barbecue barns."

The County Line Barbecue offers wood-smoked barbecue in an upscale '60s theme roadhouse atmosphere created with framed period issues of *Life* magazine and nostalgic music. The County Line Barbecue is an upscale chain based in Austin, TX, that oper-

ates 11 units in Texas, Colorado, New Mexico, and Oklahoma, according to Don "Skeeter" Miller.

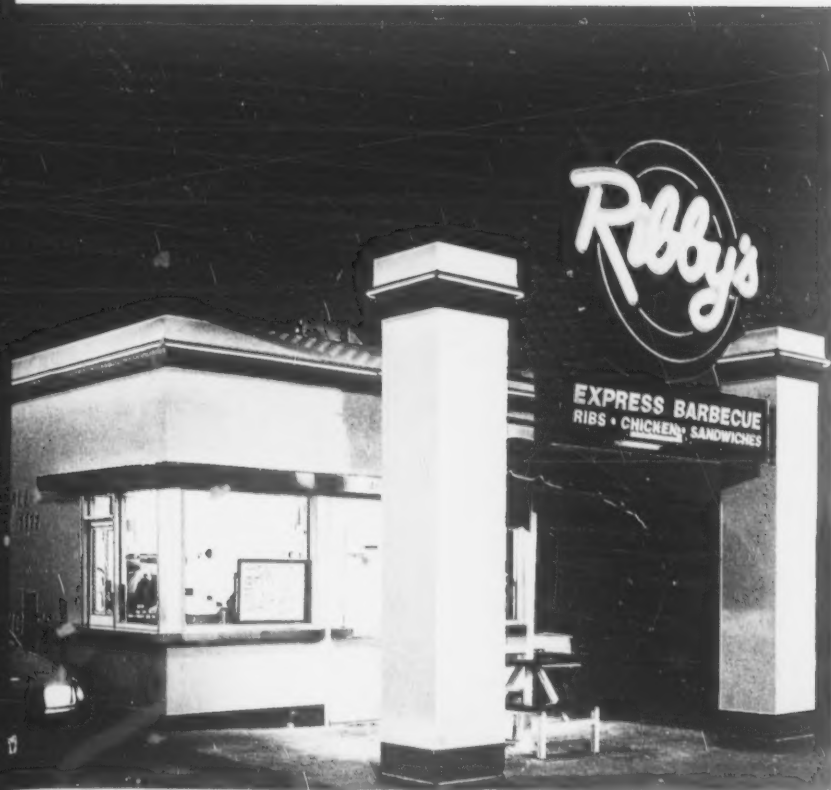
ates 11 units in Texas, Colorado, New Mexico, and Oklahoma, according to Don "Skeeter" Miller.

To justify its \$12 average checks, The County Line smokes its food over hard woods for 18 to 20 hours. Bread and ice cream are made on premise. The restaurants even have a wine list specially selected to accompany barbecue—something few competitors can match.

Also a far cry from the down 'n' dirty smokehouse barbecue is Randall's Ribhouse, a Levy Restaurants concept located near Chicago's Magnificent Mile. It is decorated with black-and-white checkered tablecloths and artwork from Chicago galleries.

The 180-seat, full-service restaurant also seats 75 in its outdoor cafe. House

continued on page 186



COUNTRY BARBECUE

Nashville-based Lee's Famous Recipe Chicken has a broad menu that goes well beyond fried chicken to include barbecued ribs and country dishes.

specialties are baby back ribs (\$14.95 full slab, \$11.95 half slab), veal back ribs (\$13.95), and Texas beef ribs (\$14.95), slowly smoked over applewood and served with Randall's Famous BBQ Sauce. The sauce is also sold to go for \$1.95.

Rib-It is an eight-unit chain in Philadelphia and South Jersey that doesn't put all its bones in one basket. The concept competes as a casual dining place, a sports restaurant, and even a family restaurant, says president Steven M. Lewis of Norristown, PA-based U.S. Dining Inc.

The most successful arena is the midprice market—restaurants like Po Folks and Cracker Barrel.



A live sports radio show broadcast from Rib-It in downtown Philadelphia has given the concept a big publicity boost, Lewis reports. A children's placemat menu entertains with frog cartoons, puzzles, and dishes such as Double Doggie (\$2.95) and Kiddy-Parmigiana (\$3.95).

U.S. Dining acquired Rib-It in 1987 as a five-unit, \$7.5 million chain. Since then, Rib-It has added three more units, and Lewis projects that sales will reach \$15 million to \$18 million this year. Franchising is under consideration; the success of the first Rib-It outside metro Philadelphia, to be built this year in Camp Hill, PA, will be a deciding factor.

FRANCHISING. Franchising is in the cards for Trotter's Barbecue, a four-unit chain based in Springfield, MO, that operates in southern Missouri and St. Louis. Units average 900 to 1,000

covers per day. In fact, waiting lines at times snake around the buildings, according to director of operations John Garnier. Trotter's first franchise is slated to open this year in Arnold, MO, outside St. Louis. Several other franchise deals are in the works, including a Kansas City store. "Before we considered franchising, we committed ourselves to having the franchises run as well as our company stores," says Garnier.

Trotter's popularity is based on hickory-smoked meats, an extensive food bar, and 40 varieties of pie. The full-service restaurants seat 175 to 180 in a "contemporary Western" atmosphere, says Garnier. Beer, wine, and liquor are served in locales that permit it. Rib prices range from \$8.25 for a four-rib portion to \$14.65 for a full slab.

Damon's, The Place For Ribs, celebrates its 10th anniversary this year

continued on page 188



At Fat Boys' Bar-B-Q, meat is trimmed, basted with sauce, pre-smoked until it is 70% done, then finished to order in a "service pit."

COUNTRY BARBECUE

with prospects of continuing sales and unit growth. The group consists of Damon's Inc., the 13-unit master franchisor, which is based in Hilton Head, SC, and two master subfranchisors, Columbus, OH-based Damon's Management Inc., which has 18 units, and Myrtle Beach, SC-based Damon's Eastern Carolinas, which is preparing its second unit opening. The system will achieve its first million dollar sales week sometime this spring on the way to \$50 million in annual sales, projects president Ray Nevin.

Master subfranchisor Damon's Management Inc. will enjoy an infusion of expansion capital this year as a result of being acquired by its franchisee, Park Hotel Management Corp. of Columbus, which has four units. It expects six additional openings in 1989, to be followed by at least nine in 1990, says director of franchising Vincent Simonetti. Damon's future growth formula will be 50/50 company/franchised units.

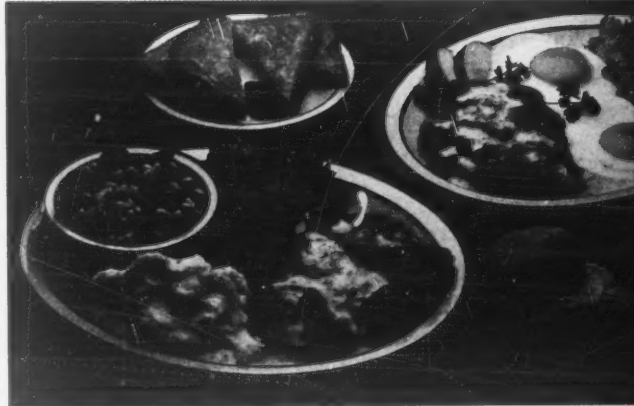
Damon's has a limited menu that includes barbecued ribs (\$10.95 to \$12.95), barbecued shrimp (\$13.95), a rib-and-shrimp combo dinner (\$12.95), as well as steaks, onion ring loaf, chicken, and a seafood loaf of the day. Cole slaw and applesauce are favorite accompaniments.

Emil Villa's Original Hick'ry Pit is a concept "whose name doesn't do it justice," says president and CEO Michael Kwiatkowski. He feels that the name has been a marketing impediment for the 10-unit San Francisco Bay Area chain, which his Oakland-based Pacific Coast Concepts Inc. acquired from Clorox Co. in 1986.

Wood-smoked steaks, hams, and ribs

Upscale restaurants offer a higher degree of atmosphere than the farm decor of traditional "barbecue barns."

The 250-unit, Minneapolis-based Country Kitchen chain menus a mix of conservative homestyle and mainstream dishes. Homestyle dishes include country-fried chicken, calico bean soup, and country-fried steak.



are key to the concept. But breakfast is big business, too, featuring freshly baked danish, freshly made sausage, and barbecued ham sliced off the bone. Another Emil's signature is 20 varieties of pie baked daily. Emil's serves full-service breakfast, lunch, and dinner to an average of 1,000 customers daily. The 165-seat Walnut Creek, CA, store averages 1,600 covers daily. The check average is \$6.50; the average annual unit volume is \$2 million.

This year, Emil's will grow by two units, Kwiatkowski says. He plans to cluster new units within a few miles of existing ones to capitalize on name recognition. Ultimately, Kwiatkowski would like to acquire a midsize regional restaurant chain as a growth vehicle.

Since 1975, the five-unit Gridley's Bar-B-Q chain has passed the competitive test in Memphis, one of the nation's hotbeds of barbecue. Founder Clyde Gridley has filled a niche for high-quality barbecue in both full-service and quick-service modes, including a substantial carry-out business. The four company restaurants garner sales of about \$7.5 million, not counting catering, retail sales of its barbecue sauce, and air express delivery of barbecue. The sole franchised store in Jackson, MS, has done well since 1982.

Gridley's smokes its meat over hardwood and hickory for 16 hours. Barbecued ribs account for 50% of sales; barbecued pork shoulder, either pulled or chopped, accounts for 30%. Other barbecued items include brisket, chicken,

and Cajun shrimp. Memphis customers like to put coleslaw on their barbecue sandwiches.

Ft. Lauderdale, FL-based Bobby Rubino's Place For Ribs has rolled out a new image campaign called "Honest American Food." TV, radio, newspapers, and outdoor signage carry the message in its lead South Florida market. TV spots contrast Bobby Rubino's signature barbecued baby back ribs (\$12.95), barbecued chicken (\$6.95), and barbecued shrimp skewered with pineapple chunks (\$12.95) in a "humorously negative way" with competing fare such as sushi and pizza.

The 10-year-old, privately held Bobby Rubino's has 20 full-service barbecue restaurants, half of which are franchised. In addition to its Florida stronghold, stores are located in New York, Pennsylvania, California, and Canada. Systemwide sales approximate \$40 million. Several new locations are expected to open this year.

Dr. Rich Davis, who entered the foodservice business via his bottled barbecue sauce, hopes to grow his restaurant concept, K.C. Masterpiece Barbecue & Grill, into a chain. The 160-seat flagship K.C. Masterpiece Barbecue & Grill opened two years ago in Overland Park, KS. Projected sales this year are \$2.5 million. Checks average \$7 at lunch, \$13.25 at dinner. A second store opened recently in St. Louis. Chicago may be next.

"It's a lot of trouble to stay authentic," continued on page 190

COUNTRY BARBECUE

Barbecue and country dishes are well-seasoned and robustly flavored. Their appeal is variety, novelty, nostalgia, and comfort.

tic," says Davis. In his operation, the meat is rubbed with seasonings, then slowly smoked in a closed hickory pit for 12 to 14 hours. Any remaining fat is carefully trimmed away before serving.

Prolonged smoking and trimming fat reduces yield and raises food cost, but it has health as well as flavor benefits, says son Charles Davis, a company vice president. "In Kansas City and the Midwest, cholesterol is not much of a concern. But it will be, someday," he says. Another problem is the need for skilled labor. "It's very difficult to find or train a good barbecue cook," says Charles Davis.

But K.C. Masterpiece won't compromise its standards for expansion. "If it can't be done right on a large scale, we'll hold the company at two or three restaurants," Charles Davis says.

CASUAL DINING. Ribs fit in well with the good times and fun-food atmosphere of the casual dining segment. H.I. Ribster's is a fledgling rib concept decidedly in the casual-dining vein. The three-unit chain was one of several concepts acquired last year from Gilbert/Robinson (G/R) Inc. by a group of former G/R executives. They formed Creative Restaurant Management Inc., based in Shawnee Mission, KS.

The 40-item H.I. Ribster's menu features barbecue and plenty of diversity. Barbecued baby back ribs (\$13.95), beef ribs (\$10.75), and rotisserie barbecued chicken (\$9.75) are signatures. Also menued are roast prime rib (\$13.95), filet mignon (\$13.95), chicken-fried steak (\$6.95), nachos (\$3.95), a produce and pasta bar, and hamburger platters (\$5.45 to \$5.95). The menu also promotes daiquiris, margaritas, beer,

and wine.

Another casual-dining concept that features ribs is G/R's 27-unit Darryl's chain. Although Darryl's was founded in Raleigh, NC, and trades mainly in the South, G/R has taken care to avoid stereotyping it with the "country" label. "Darryl's was in a position to acquire a Cracker Barrel type of image, but we resisted it," says culinary director Doug Czufin. "It's a casual dining restaurant, and we expect to expand in that regard."

Barbecue pork and beef ribs are signature items, accounting for 25% of sales. But they appear in an extensive menu that includes dishes as diverse as fettuccine carbonara, fried clam po' boys, tuna melts, hamburgers, and pasta salads.

Darryl's strives for both a "fun" casual dining atmosphere and family appeal. It hopes to foster both with a pair of new items this spring. One is the Roadside Chicken Sandwich, a barbecued chicken breast dressed with onions, bacon, and cheese, served in a bun marked with tire tracks made with a branding iron. The other is the Peanut Butter Sandwich Construction Kit, which serves kids a PB&J in a plastic truck.

COUNTRY COUSINS. The most successful arena for country cooking is the full-service, midprice restaurant market. Restaurants like Po Folks, Black-eyed Pea, and Cracker Barrel revel in country atmosphere and regional dishes. Others, like Bob Evans, Country

Kitchen, Shoney's, and Marie Calender's, incorporate country flavor into their menus and decor to varying degrees, but position themselves closer to the mainstream to appeal to broader constituencies.

"When you hear 'country,' you think of two things—fresh-baked biscuits and corn bread and lots of vegetables and side dishes," says marketing director Mike McNeil of Nashville-based Po Folks, a 144-unit family-oriented chain.

Po Folks certainly fills that expectation. Dinners include a choice of two of its 16 vegetables and side dishes, including turnip greens, fried okra, black-eyed peas, red beans and rice, seafood gumbo, and "po-tater" salad. Also available are its freshly baked "biscuits" and corn bread.

Apart from its food, Po Folks has attracted notoriety in recent years because of its financial struggles. Now, executives believe the company has turned the corner on its difficulties. Po Folks exited Chapter XI protection early this year and named former executive vice president and CFO John Scott to succeed interim boss John Theoharis as president and CEO. Scott will implement the company's reorganization plan using \$2.4 million in operating capital raised by an equity offering to private investors.

Weekly same-store sales gains since last October are buoying the spirits at Po Folks, reports McNeil. Promotions and new menu rollouts have helped; the

continued on page 195

Black-eyed Pea, the growth-minded 50-unit country chain, is operated by Dallas-based Prufrock Restaurants, a subsidiary of the British firm Unigate PLC. The chain is dedicated to "home cooking worth going out for."



COUNTRY BARBECUE

new "Maison-Dixon" meatloaf dinner (\$5.29), pot roast dinner (\$5.49), and catfish "fee-lays" (\$6.69) join the menu alongside Po Folks favorites such as "kuntry"-fried steak and fried chicken.

A recent seafood promotion at Po Folks offered customers a choice of clams, oysters, crab cakes, scallops, haddock, catfish, or shrimp, fried and served with hush puppies and coleslaw. Another promotion allowed customers to "mix and match" seafood and a home-style item such as kuntry-fried steak or a pork chop.

Black-eyed Pea is dedicated to "home cooking worth going out for" with a few concessions to lighter eating. The

growth-minded 50-unit country chain is operated by Dallas-based Prufrock Restaurants, a subsidiary of the British firm Unigate PLC.

The most popular entrees are chicken-fried steak and chicken-fried chicken (each priced at \$5.45). A combination plate with a choice of three vegetables and a salad is the second best seller in a number of stores (priced at \$4.50), reports operations vice president Ricky Richardson. Also popular are Mom's Meat Loaf (\$4.95) and crispy deep-fried catfish (\$5.75). Black-eyed Pea offers the customary country vegetables and side dishes such as fried okra, red beans and rice, battered and fried corn on the

Many midscale chicken chains such as

Grandy's and Mrs.

Winner's also specialize in country cooking.

owned. Target areas are Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas, and greater Washington, DC.

Also attracting attention is Lebanon, TN-based Cracker Barrel, which has pushed volumes as high as \$2 million in some units. Sales for the fiscal year ending August 1, 1988, totaled \$125 million. This spring, the company reported a 14% same-store sales increase and a 16% rise in gift shop sales. The company owns and operates 69 stores in 12 states. The concept is full-service and family-oriented.

This year, Cracker Barrel raised \$22 million to fuel expansion with a common stock offering. It has maintained a 20% expansion rate, opening 12 stores last year; 15 are targeted for this year. Most units are located on interstate highways; I-75 Southeast from Tennessee to Florida is a strong market. The chain has branched out as far north as Ft. Wayne, IN. "We haven't seen any geographical limits so far," says CFO Jimmy White.

Breakfast, which is served all day, has long been a mainstay of the chain, garnering 25% of business. Other menu items include barbecued baby back ribs, a 10-oz. ribeye steak, chicken and dumplings, catfish, and pork chops, served with biscuits or corn bread and an array of vegetables. The company is testing country-fried steak.

HOMESTYLE. Columbus, OH-based Bob Evans Restaurants describes its chain of 220 family restaurants as "homestyle," according to vice president of marketing Roger Williams. "People find it more believable than 'homemade' or 'country'," he says.

Bob Evans creates the homestyle identity with dishes such as the Homestead Breakfast of eggs, sausage or ba-

continued on page 196



One of Darryl's "fun" menu items is its Roadside Chicken Sandwich, a barbecued chicken breast dressed with onions, bacon, and cheese, served in a bun marked with tire tracks.

cob, and of course, black-eyed peas.

In addition, Black-eyed Pea recognizes the concerns of health-conscious customers with dishes such as baked whitefish (\$5.75), grilled chicken salad (\$5.25), charbroiled chicken breast (\$5.75), and whole wheat rolls. The menu notes that all frying is done in vegetable oil.

From its Dallas base, which supports a 19-unit cluster, Prufrock has spread the concept as far as suburban Washington, DC, where it opened its 50th unit this year, and Denver, where seven units mark its first franchising foray.

Prufrock's projections call for opening eight to 12 new Black-eyed Pea stores annually over the next few years, both franchised and company-

COUNTRY BARBECUE



Bob Evans' Border Scramble is a large flour tortilla filled with sausage, fresh vegetables, and potatoes, topped with Texas-style chili and shredded cheese.

con, sausage gravy, home fries, and buttermilk biscuits (priced at \$5.90); sausage gravy and biscuits (\$3.30); chicken-n-noodles (\$4.35); homestyle meat loaf (\$4.95); country-fried steak (\$4.95); fried or charbroiled catfish (\$5.95); and its best-selling dessert, peanut butter pie (\$1.60).

In recent years, Bob Evans has stretched its definition of homestyle to include a taco salad (priced at \$4.25) and veal parmigiana with spaghetti (\$4.95). Most recently, the chain added the Border Scramble (priced at \$3.95), which is a large flour tortilla filled with sausage, fresh vegetables, and potatoes, topped with Texas-style chili and shredded cheese. New for health-conscious consumers this year are an omelet made with egg substitute, a fruit plate, and a raisin-bran muffin.

Conceptually, Country Kitchen is based on cooking reminiscent of Mom's kitchen. The 250-unit, Minneapolis-based Country Kitchen chain, a Carlson

Companies subsidiary, menus a mix of conservative homestyle and mainstream dishes. Homestyle dishes include country-fried chicken, calico bean soup, and country-fried steak, last year's successful rollout. But the kitchen also dishes up Reuben sandwiches, veal parmigiana, and a double-decker Country Boy cheeseburger.

This spring, country-fried steak and eggs debuts as a breakfast item. It follows the acceptance of the country-fried steak platter, which was supported by TV spots that introduced the dish to unfamiliar audiences in the Midwest. In addition, meat loaf returns to the menu after an absence of several years.

ADDING VALUE. In general, country and homestyle chains have avoided serving alcohol, fearful of hurting the family-oriented image. But Juergen Bartels, president of the Carlson Hospitality Group, has called for the intro-

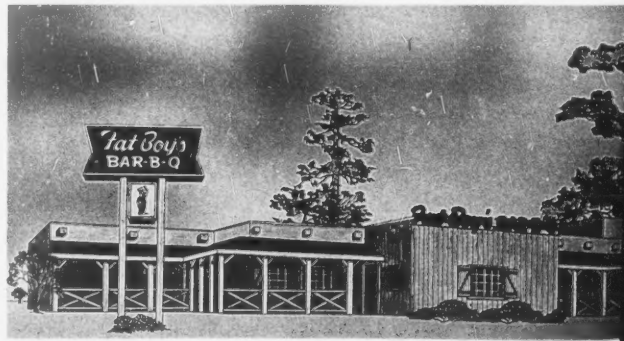
Columbus, OH-based Bob Evans Restaurants prefers to describe its chain of 220 family restaurants as 'homestyle,' rather than 'country.'

duction of liquor service in Country Kitchens as a way of adding value and broadening appeal. Some 50 stores have added beer and wine, and a handful serve liquor.

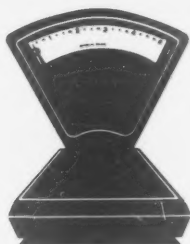
Although based in Nashville and trading widely in the South, 636-unit Shoney's only dabbles in country cooking. Its menu emphasizes standard midprice family fare such as charbroiled hamburgers, fish 'n' chips, fried shrimp, and spaghetti. Shoney's country-fried steak dinner, served with milk gravy and rice or french fries (\$5.29), has been a popular seller for more than seven years throughout its 20-state trading area, according to marketing manager Jeff Sowell. It also offers Louisiana-style fried fish with a specially seasoned breading (\$6.19). Other country foods are found on its Breakfast and Fruit Bar: grits, biscuits and gravy,

continued on page 198

Cocoa, FL-based Fat Boys' Bar-B-Q is a 34-unit system; all but two units are franchised. The concept includes both full-service "leisure" stores and quick-service units.



Beefier Beef.



☐ Beef that's up to 95% lean means more lean beef per pound. ☐ More profit for you. ☐ Our beef is range fed, so it's naturally leaner. ☐ It's USDA inspected. ☐ And we pack it to suit your needs. ☐ Frozen or fresh chilled. ☐ A versatile product for meat processors, restaurants, retailers, or delis. ☐ Just ask your distributor. ☐ Or, for the distributor or importer nearest you write: Australian Meat and Live-stock Corporation, 805 Third Avenue, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10022. ☐ Or call 1-800-453-5600.

Australian Beef

more beef per pound.



COUNTRY BARBECUE

and sausage rice.

Orange, CA-based Marie Callender's is a midprice restaurant chain often mistakenly assumed to be of Midwestern origins. After four decades of business on the West Coast, the 151-unit chain is "coming home" to the heartland for the first time. Its April opening in Aurora, IL, is the first of six restaurants slated to debut in the suburbs of Chicago, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis this year, paving the way for further Midwest expansion.

Callender's homestyle cooking and lace-curtained "homey Americana" decor will be a good match for Midwestern markets, says vice president of marketing Neil Naroff. The chain made its homestyle cooking reputation with scratch-cooked dishes such as meat loaf



The barbecue category has been shadowed by the failure of Luther's attempt at establishing a national chain several years ago.

with country gravy (\$8.25), breadbasket stew served in a hollowed sourdough loaf (\$6.25), turkey pot pie (\$5.75), chicken and noodles (\$5.95), St. Louis ribs (\$10.95), and more than 30 kinds of freshly baked pies.

This year will bring a change of ownership for Marie Callender's. It is being acquired from its parent Ramada Corp. by the New York City-based Wilshire Restaurant Group.

Buyout negotiations are also underway between Johnny Appleseed Restaurants, owned by the hotel-motel company Petlin Inc., and Ashton Trice, an original investor in the concept and former company officer. The eight-unit Fredericksburg, VA-based chain has stores in West Virginia, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Orlando, FL.

**MARKET
SEGMENT
REPORT**

COUNTRY BARBECUE

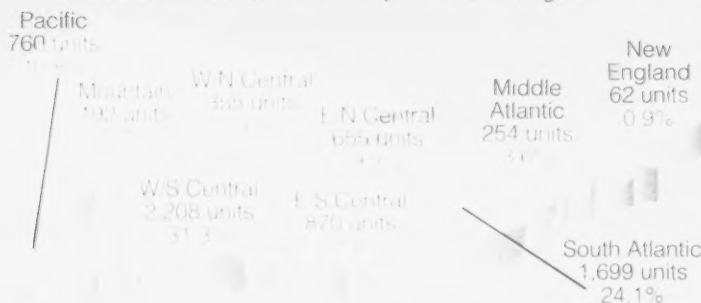
Johnny Appleseed's apple theme pervades the concept, beginning with a 14-ft.-high replica of the legendary Johnny Appleseed in front of the restaurant. Apple-oriented homestyle dishes are signatures, such as the McIntosh breakfast special, a pancake and bacon or sausage combo, apple pie, apple dumplings, and apple fritters (\$2.64). The menu is broad, including chicken-fried steak (\$4.76), fried chicken (\$3.99), barbecued pork ribs (\$7.99), lasagna (\$6.81), spaghetti (\$5.75), New York strip steak (\$9.95), and broiled or fried whitefish (\$6.86). Dinners come with a choice of two of 16 vegetables and side dishes including, of course, applesauce and fried apples.

CHICKEN-FLAVORED. Some of the players in the fried chicken segment, such as Lee's Famous Recipe Chicken,

(continued on page 206)

BBQ STICKS TO SOUTHERN RIBS

Distribution of Barbecue units by U.S. Census Regions

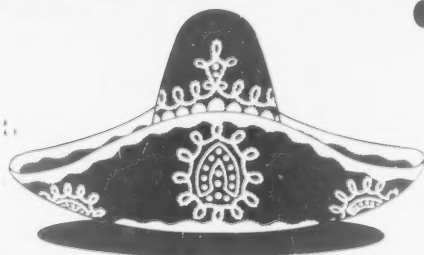


TOTAL BARBECUE UNITS:

7,055 units, or
1.9% of total U.S. restaurants.

SOURCE: U.S. DEPT. OF COMMERCE, NATIONAL BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENT SURVEY

Beefier Fajitas.



From Mexican and Chinese to American cuisine, beef that's up to 95% lean means beefier beef dishes.

And better profits. Our beef is range fed, so it's naturally leaner. Naturally tasty, too.

Two great selling points in this health-conscious, quality-conscious time. It's USDA inspected.

Available fresh chilled or frozen. A versatile beef for restaurants, retailers, delis, or meat processors. Ask your distributor. Or for the name of the distributor or importer nearest you, write

Australian Meat and Live-stock Corporation, 805 Third Avenue, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10022.

Or call 1-800-453-5600.

Australian Beef

more beef per pound.

COUNTRY BARBECUE

Grandy's, and Mrs. Winner's Chicken & Biscuits, are often considered to serve country cooking.

Nashville-based Lee's Famous Recipe Chicken, a 282-unit Shoney's Inc. subsidiary, has a menu that goes well beyond just chicken. It offers barbecued ribs, a chicken liver or gizzard dinner, and country-fried steak, plus side dishes such as mashed potatoes and gravy, country rice, chicken-fried potato wedges, and red beans and rice. Country cooking evidently agrees with its customers. Last year, Lee's realized its greatest annual gain in comparable store sales with an 8.7% increase.

Lewisville, TX-based Grandy's, an upscale fast-food chicken concept, is part of Anwar Soliman's American Restaurant Group. New advertising is reaffirming its position "in the heart of fast food," says vice president of mar-

■ ■ ■

Despite some successful forays into the barbecue segment by many small regional chains, independent operators still dominate the category.

keting Bob Lee. Grandy's is menuing a country-fried steak sandwich and chicken breast filet sandwich that it hopes will also expand lunch trade.

Grandy's homestyle roots are sunk primarily into Texas and Oklahoma, where 80% of its 205 units are located. Outposts are Tampa and Ft. Myers, FL, and Fresno, CA. Projected 1989 sales are \$185 million to \$200 million, says Lee.

How far can Grandy's take country cooking? The limit so far is Asia. Last year, Grandy's opened the first of three franchises in Malaysia, and has inked a franchise deal for Australia.

Fried chicken and biscuits are still integral to Brentwood, TN-based Mrs. Winner's Chicken & Biscuits. But the 145-unit fast-food chain is broadening its menu with Southern-style foods

continued on page 202

NOW, Make More Money with

Genuine Hickory Pit Barbecue



Now you can smoke genuine hickory pit barbecue like an expert with Cookshack's automatic **SUPER SMOKER** ovens. Hickory and mesquite woods, sauces and spices. You get the confidence of Cookshack's 20 years in the barbecue business.

- No attention needed while cooking, and it's delicious
- Authentic hickory smoked barbecue smells great
- LOW shrink "no-convection" smoking, more profit for you
- Easy to use... no moving parts, low investment too
- Easy to clean... inner parts remove fast - in seconds!

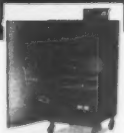
"I've added over \$47,000 to my yearly profits!"

Get Yours NOW

COOKSHACK

2304 N. Ash St.
Ponca City, OK 74604
405/765-3669

Call for free booklet "How to Choose a Smoker." - Ready to buy? Ask about **NO-RISK OFFER** 100% backed by no-nonsense guarantee.



POWER



Market research, forecasts and trend analyses from IFMA continually document the power of our industry - and provide the information needed for profitable planning. From segment data to proprietary studies, IFMA research is a valued source of industry knowledge.

To learn more about the power of IFMA programs and services, write International Foodservice Manufacturers Association, 321 N. Clark Street, Suite 2940, Chicago, IL 60610. Or call 312-944-3838.



works for you

For more information circle number 194

**MARKET
SEGMENT
REPORT**

COUNTRY BARBECUE

such as country-fried steak, chicken and dumplings, pot roast, and meat loaf (each priced at \$2.99). Accompanying them are an array of vegetables and side dishes. The new items are part of a move away from direct competition

with Kentucky Fried Chicken, says president and CEO Lonnie Stout.

Stout sees wide acceptance for such cooking. "It could travel well in most areas of the country," he says. Mrs. Winner's 145 stores, which are predom-

inantly franchised, are concentrated in a 10-state belt from the Carolinas to Kansas City. There is a 50-unit cluster in Atlanta.

Another of the "dabblers" in country cooking is USACafes' Bonanza family restaurants. Firmly identified with steak when founded 25 years ago, Bonanza has broadened its menu with poultry, seafood, and salads. Today, country-fried steak is a popular core menu item for Bonanza franchisees, reports president and CEO Jeff Rogers. In fact, franchisees are calling for more home-style foods, he says. "There's no question that as more meals are pur-

In Smoked BBQ Equipment there's Only ONE BOSS!...

The BOSS Delivers More Flavor & Profit Because...



The Boss is the original pressure smoker with 29 years experience & a nation-wide sales service network to back you up! WE ARE THE BEST.



Produce up to 90 lbs. of ribs in 1 1/2 hrs. In a day the biggest Boss outcooks some walk-in ovens.

A handful of hickory or mesquite chips does it! You smoke only the meat, not the whole area.

The Boss operates under pressure and drives the delicious smoke to the bone.

Award winning sauce mix.

Besides BBQ and vegetables, you can cold smoke steak, prime ribs, cheeses, etc.

No plumbing. Normally no venting needed.



Cooks automatically just set the timer and forget it.

Up to 20% more product to sell. Smoke and moist heat leave the meat tender & juicy, resulting in up to 50% less shrinkage.

The Boss's own prep mix and moist heat result in a tender & delicious exterior, not the dry crust that results from hours of dry heat.

**CALL THE BOSS TODAY!
1-800-331-5565**

In Okla. call collect (918) 667-3341

The Boss has a size for any operation and provides personnel training, complete supplies, and promotional aids with a nation-wide sales service network. Display warmers available.



LEASING PLANS AVAILABLE

SMOKAROMA, INC.
P.O. BOX 25/BILEY, OKLA. 74829

Please send me more information.

Firm _____

Name _____ Title _____

Address _____ Phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

For information circle number 191

The excellent holding qualities of barbecued foods make this a prime category for delivery services.

chased away from home, demand grows for the type of meals people had at home," Rogers believes.

UPSCALE DOWN HOME. Lastly, there are a few restaurant operators who raise country cooking to a higher level. Indigenous Southern cooking is updated with taste and nutrition in mind at Carolina's and The Colony House in Charleston, SC, two upscale restaurants owned by M.W. Associates. Typical dishes are black-eyed pea cake with tomato chutney and shrimp with freshly made grits cake.

Kitchen philosophy has changed, but the ingredients remain the same. "Instead of cooking collard greens for hours with fatback, we'll make a chiffonade of collard greens and cook them quickly in a wok," says M.W.'s operations vice president Chris Weihs.

In the future, there is no question that barbecue and country cooking have good prospects to spread further. But widespread expansion on a chain basis will depend on the acumen of the players and how broad an appeal they can create.

RESTAURANT BUSINESS / JUNE 10, 1989

MENU IDEAS

Ice Dreams

BY SCOTT ALLMENDINGER

There is no better time to serve ice cream than the summer months ahead, and no one enjoys ice cream as much as Americans do. The ways to indulge customers' ice cream cravings are seemingly endless, as operators across the country crank it out in new flavors and forms that appeal to calorie-conscious and extravagant diners alike.

According to *Restaurant Business* research, 68% of restaurants serve ice cream, while 22% offer soft serve, 6% serve frozen yogurt, and 15% serve ice cream novelties (such as ice pops, frozen chocolate candies, and ice cream bars).

The United States, in fact, is the largest consumer of ice cream and related products in the world at 46.3 pints per capita. Foodservice sales alone represent a \$4.5 billion market.

The two hottest products in the segment stand at opposite ends of the health-consciousness spectrum. Superpremium ice creams, typically with a hefty 16% butterfat content, "represent the greatest area of growth in the dairy industry," says the National Ice Cream Retailers Association, a Columbus, OH-based trade organization. Meanwhile, sales of frozen yogurt have tripled, due mainly to yogurt's positive health image.

The Food and Drug Administration is currently considering adopting standards for "lite" ice cream, creating even more options—and confusion.

DECADENT DESSERTS. "People coming to eat barbecue aren't that cautious about calories," says Charlie Davis, owner of K.C. Masterpiece Barbecue and Grill in Kansas City, KS. "So we came up with the most decadent des-

American Festival Cafe in New York City offers patrons this Statue of Liberty sundae that was originally created to celebrate the monument's centennial in 1986. For ingredients, see next page.



serts we could think of." Two ice cream pies alone account for 80% of K.C. Masterpiece's dessert sales. Davis' favorite creation is the chocolate peanut butter ice cream pie (pictured on page 237), a signature dessert so successful that it accounts for 60% of all dessert sales. The second most popular dessert on the K.C. Masterpiece menu is another ice cream pie flavored with coffee and toffee, which accounts for 20% of dessert sales.

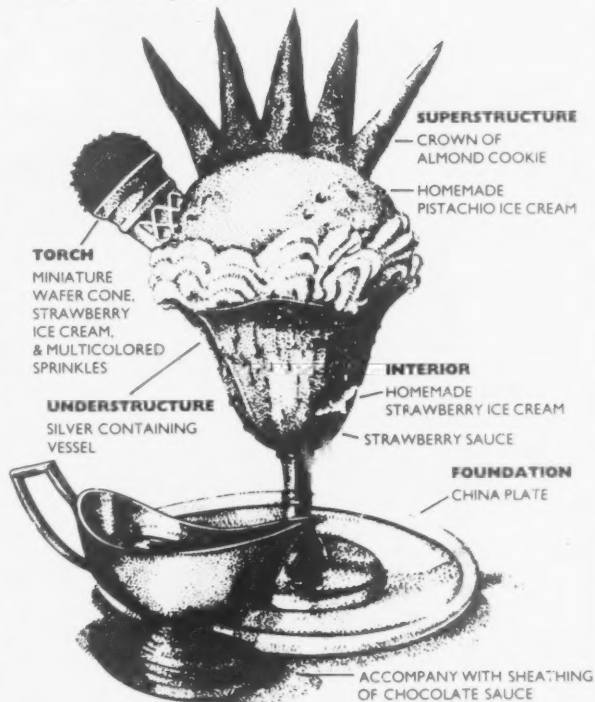
Calories apparently are not on the minds of diners at the American Festival Café in New York City's Rockefeller Center. During the summer months, the American Festival converts an outdoor ice rink to *al fresco* seating with sundae menu table tents.

One of chef Francis Keller's best-selling sundaes is called the Statue of Liberty priced at \$4.95 (pictured on page 233, diagram at right), created for the monument's centennial celebration three years ago. The Liberty sundae has proven so popular that "I can't get it off the menu," laughs Keller. The sundae menu at the American Festival has generated as much as \$20,000 in revenue in a single week.

Despite such indulgence occasions, however, health consciousness and improved flavor are teaming to make frozen yogurt, both soft and hardpack, the snacking star of the future. Whereas attempts to market frozen yogurt in the 1970s failed mainly because the product had the sour flavor of fresh yogurt, modern frozen yogurt has a mild flavor that makes it acceptable to mainstream tastes.

Tom and Debbie Bottorf, owners of What's Your Scoop in Wintersville, OH, added soft-serve yogurt a year ago and report that it now accounts for half of their sales. Karen Dufresene of Taz-zii Ice Cream Italiano in San Antonio, says that sales of hardpack frozen yogurt

PROJECT STATUE OF LIBERTY SUNDAE \$4.95



have increased between 10% and 40% in their 5 stores.

"The whole industry is moving in the direction of low-fat, low-calorie products," says Terry Holden, marketing director of Oklahoma City-based Braum Ice Cream Stores. Braum's 205 stores recently introduced both a hardpack 5% butterfat frozen yogurt and a 5% butterfat ice milk called Premium Lite.

RICH AND INTRIGUING. Holden feels that a key to the success of both lines has been the use of flavors that sound rich and intriguing. "Especially with frozen yogurt, our customers are expecting to find flavors that are different," he says.

Premium Lite comes in such fattening-sounding flavors as English toffee and cherry-amaretto, while popular frozen yogurt varieties include banana-pecan and pineapple-almond. Holden

points out that fruit-based flavors are especially appropriate for frozen yogurt.

One decision operators must make when selling frozen yogurt is whether to offer hardpack or soft serve. Braum's Holden feels that hardpack served from dipping cabinets is the best choice for their old-fashioned-style shops: "Customers just look at it as another kind of ice cream, so there's less intimidation. Also, we can feature a wider variety of flavors."

Braum's own plant can supply its shops with 32 custom flavors of frozen yogurt, an advantage not available to smaller operations.

One company that is having success serving both soft-serve and hardpack frozen yogurt is Papa Aldo's International, a Portland, OR-based pizza chain. So far, 15 of Papa Aldo's 85 existing stores have been retrofitted with a minimum of two, three-headed soft-serve machines, and all new franchi-

sees will be required to be similarly equipped. These units also have freezers to store three-gallon tubs of hard-pack.

In all, 45 flavors are available to franchisees, 22 of which will be featured each day. Popular flavors of hardpack include rocky road and pralines and cream; flavors of soft-serve "customized" in the machines include boysenberry, pumpkin, and after-dinner mint.

According to director of franchise development Dennis Steinman, units with frozen yogurt are increasing annual sales between \$75,000 and \$150,000. "It's totally supplemental revenue because frozen yogurt doesn't compete with anything else in the store," says Steinman.

Buyer profiles of pizza and frozen yogurt are different enough to enable Papa Aldo's units to expand their customer base. In addition, since sales of

RESTAURANT BUSINESS TEST KITCHEN

MENU IDEAS

Handling and storage influence the quality of your ice cream and soft-serve dishes. Here are a few points to remember:

- Storage temperatures should be -10°F. to -25°F. and should never rise above -10°F. Frozen products shrink at higher temperatures. Any melting and refreezing of the product will cause ice crystals to form and damage its texture.

- The optimum temperature for dipping cabinets is 3°F. to 7°F. This range will prevent shrinkage, but still allow for easy scooping.

- Consult your ice cream supplier for details on storage, since formulas of product vary.

- High sugar-content varieties tend to be softer; store in a separate, colder container if possible. If not, store near the bottom of the freezer, where it is likely to be colder.

- Proper cleaning of soft-serve machines is mandated by local authorities, usually on a daily basis. Each cleaning will require approximately 20 minutes of labor. One equipment company manufactures a machine that requires cleaning only once every 2 weeks.

- Soft serve refers only to a method of dispensing, and can cover a variety of products from frozen

custard to nondairy. To insure consistency, look for a machine that monitors viscosity rather than temperature.

- During extended nonsale periods, soft-serve product can break down to a watery consistency due to overbeating. If a machine has not dispensed product for a while, simply draw off a small amount of product. This will cause fresh mix to enter the machine and become frozen, a more effective process than adjusting the temperature control.

- Overrun refers to the percentage of air incorporated into ice cream or soft serve. The ideal range for a gravity-fed soft-serve machine is 30% to 60%. Lower overrun will produce heavier portions and stronger, richer flavors, and will be more expensive. High overrun will produce lower-calorie, lighter-texture product with a greater yield. Too little overrun will produce soft serve that does not stand up well on a cone; too much overrun will give your customers a poor perception of value.

- Flavors can be customized by combining two mixes in desired proportions. Adding solid items such as cookie chunks or fruit, however, is not recommended. The pieces might clog an air or mix intake.

both products peak in opposite seasons, the move to frozen yogurt has helped to smooth out what Steinman calls "the roller coaster ride of seasonality."

BUILDING TAKE-HOME SALES. The frozen yogurt dessert program at Papa Aldo's includes baking of cookies and waffle cones on-premise. Four-inch chocolate chip, peanut butter, and whole wheat raisin cookies are used to make soft-serve frozen yogurt sandwiches, which are made ahead and stored in a display freezer.

Customers can also purchase quarts of frozen yogurt and frozen yogurt pies with chocolate cookie-crumble crusts to take home. To build these take-home sales, store managers offer free samples to customers who are waiting for pizzas to come out of the oven. One especially successful promotion offers a full meal—one three-topping "take-and-bake" pizza, two salads, and a quart of frozen yogurt—for \$14.95.

A major factor in Papa Aldo's decision to offer frozen yogurt instead of ice cream is the health appeal of a yogurt product that contains between 16 and 20 calories per ounce, depending on the flavor.

Each unit must use one soft-serve machine exclusively for nonfat varieties, and toppings bars in the stores must carry three or four fresh fruit toppings. Other toppings include granola, yogurt-covered raisins, and bran, although candy toppings are popular as well.

But Stephen Beninati, cofounder of Staten Island, NY-based Everything Yogurt, says, "Sweetened or candied toppings are just not our direction."

Beninati has seen Everything Yogurt—the frozen yogurt chain he opened in 1976—grow to more than 200 stores in 28 states and \$60 million in annual sales. Soft-serve yogurt is only one line of products on a menu dominated by such healthy-sounding items as vegetarian chili with brown rice, hummus sandwiches, sugarless muffins, and "healthy quiches." Frozen yogurt toppings range from carob chips to coconut, honey, pineapple, and wheat germ.

SIGNATURE SWEET DRINKS. In addition to sundaes, frozen yogurt is used as an accompaniment to a Farm Fresh Fruit Platter as a base for drinks such as yogurt shakes and a signature or-

TOP 10 ICE CREAM FLAVORS

1. Vanilla	31.0%
2. Chocolate	8.8
3. Neapolitan	6.2
4. Vanilla Fudge	4.2
5. Cookies n Cream	3.9
6. Butter Pecan	3.8
7. Chocolate Chip	3.6
8. Strawberry	3.5
9. Rocky Road	1.3
10. Cherry	1.3

SOURCE: International Dairy Federation

